

# THE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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# The HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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## VOLTAIRE'S USE OF SOURCES IN WRITING HISTORY

*Sr. Thomas Aquinas O'Connor, S.C.L.\**

**M**ORE than two hundred years have passed since Voltaire began to write history, yet the controversy provoked by his first historical writings has continued during the greater part of the last two centuries. Contemporaries of the "*grand écrivain*" as well as modern critics have expressed conflicting views over Voltaire's position in historiography, and this diversity of opinion is characteristic of the variety that is manifested in every aspect of Voltaire's historical activity — variety in the purpose that inspired the different works, variety in the methods of research, in the appraisal and citation of sources, in the selection and presentation of data, as well as variety in the subject matter that he treated. In fact, nothing is more obvious than Voltaire's failure to follow any consistent pattern in the writing of history. A critical appraisal of Voltaire as historian therefore implies a separate and detailed examination of the individual elements that affected his writing of history.

Ample evidence exists to substantiate the conclusion that Voltaire satisfactorily performed the initial step in the writing of history when he diligently sought out every available source for the subjects that he treated.<sup>1</sup> History writing, however, consists in something more than the acquisition of material; it involves also the critical evaluation of the data extracted from the sources and the proper presentation of the material. Voltaire's success in performing these last two operations

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<sup>1</sup> The author has treated this and other aspects of Voltaire's methods in writing history in her doctoral dissertation, *An Evaluation of Voltaire's Method of Writing History*, Saint Louis University, 1949.

constitutes the subject of the present article.

No sooner had Voltaire begun to investigate the records of the past than he became convinced that much of what he read had no foundation in fact. He looked upon the accounts of the origins of nations as fabulous and the writing of ancient history as nothing more than the mixing of "a few truths with a thousand errors."<sup>2</sup> Once "an ancient error is established," he says, "policy uses it as a bit which the vulgar have put into their mouths until another superstition arises to supersede it, when policy profits by the second error as it did by the first."<sup>3</sup> Idleness, superstition, and interest, he claims, are responsible for the fables in history,<sup>4</sup> and to counteract the fabulous tales the historian must assume an attitude of incredulity toward all that he examines.<sup>5</sup> Voltaire is of the opinion that "all certainty which does not consist in mathematical demonstration is nothing more than extreme probability."<sup>6</sup> Hence, there is the necessity of witnesses to prove the truth of the testimony. As an example of evidence confirmed by witnesses Voltaire cites the case of Marco Polo whose writings were discredited by his contemporaries but were accepted, according to Voltaire, after Portuguese descriptions rendered Polo's story probable. "It [the story] is today a certainty," continues Voltaire, "of that certitude which arises from the unanimous deposition of a thousand eyewitnesses of different nations, without a single individual opposing their testimony."<sup>7</sup> Yet, paradoxical though it may be, miracles, despite witnesses, are not to be believed,<sup>8</sup> and, he adds, "all that is contrary to the ordinary course of nature ought not to be believed, at least not unless it is attested by men obviously inspired by the divine spirit, and whose inspiration it is not possible to doubt."<sup>9</sup> He makes the distinction between all Paris bearing witness to the story of a dead person being brought back to life and of all Paris affirming a victory at Fontenoy. A multiplicity of witnesses to an improbable thing, he contends, should not be accepted

<sup>2</sup> *The Works of Voltaire*, trans. W. Fleming (E. R. Du Mont, ed.; New York: 1901), XXXVII, 268. The writer was obliged to consult several editions of Voltaire's works for reasons of convenience as well as for comparison of texts.

<sup>3</sup> Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes* (Baudouin, ed.; Paris, 1828), XXIV, 419-20.

<sup>4</sup> *Works* (Du Mont), XXXVII, 269.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Oeuvres* (Baudouin), LVI, 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Works* (Du Mont), XXXVII, 270.

<sup>9</sup> *Oeuvres* (Baudouin), LVI, 19. It is clear from this quotation and other references that Voltaire did not understand the Church's teaching on miracles.



equally with the same testimony to a probable event.<sup>10</sup>

Voltaire is conscious of the power of prejudice which sometimes causes the same individual to be painted as a Cato or a Cataline, and although he is aware of the fallibility of memoirs he discloses his method of making them useful even when they are not entirely trustworthy; "If the facts related by several agree," he states, "you can accept them as true; if they do not agree you should doubt them."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, if the same event is described by opponents, any essentials in which they agree are to be accepted with certainty. But not even eye-witnesses are to be credited if the record is contrary to common sense.<sup>12</sup>

Neither do monuments, festivals, ceremonies or medals attest to the certainty of an event. Often they prove nothing, Voltaire states, except a wish to consecrate a popular opinion, and they are to be believed only when they are confirmed by the writings of contemporaries.<sup>13</sup>

The falsifications and legends that Voltaire finds in European history exasperate him. With repetition that becomes exceedingly boring, Voltaire enumerates some of the stories that have been imposed on the credulity of mankind.

A standard [he said] is brought by an angel from heaven to the monks of Saint Denis; a pigeon brings a bottle of oil to the church at Rheims; two armies of serpents engage in a pitched battle in Germany; an archbishop of Mainz is besieged and devoured by rats; and to complete it all they have taken care to mark the year of these adventures.<sup>14</sup>

These "impertinent things," Voltaire complains, are copied and repeated hundreds of times and it is in this manner that the youth and even princes are instructed and enlightened. Voltaire, like other writers of his time,<sup>15</sup> recognized the necessity of critical evaluation

<sup>10</sup> *Oeuvres* (Baudouin), LVI, 19.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, 29-30.

<sup>12</sup> *Oeuvres* (La Hure, ed.; Paris: Hachette et cie., 1859-62), XI, 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Oeuvres* (Baudouin), LVI, 21-24.

<sup>14</sup> *Idem*, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Voltaire's essays and his many reflections on history and the method of writing it, give the impression that he was initiating something unusual when he evaluated the material that he used in writing history. A more detailed treatment of this subject would show that many historians, prior to and contemporary with Voltaire, were well practiced in the art of historical criticism as it is described by Voltaire. Such works, for example, are: Père Gabriel, S.J., *Histoire de France depuis l'établissement de la monarchie française dans les Gaules* (edited by H. Griffet. 17 Vols. Paris. 1755-1757); and Père F. X. Charlevoix, S.J., *Histoire du Japon* (6 Vols. Paris. 1744).

for the sources of his information, and he was acquainted with rules of criticism that deserve credit even from a modern point of view. To Voltaire, however, theory and practice were apparently contradictory terms, and many of the principles advocated in his essays and *Remarques* on history are not practically applied in the works. To illustrate clearly Voltaire's practices it is necessary to draw upon the histories proper.

Voltaire's treatment of the negotiations incident upon the Bourbon succession to the Spanish throne is an example of his ability to use original sources as well as an illustration of his method of presenting the data at his disposal.<sup>16</sup> For this chapter Voltaire was fortunate in having access to unpublished sources that by all the rules of criticism were worthy of credit.<sup>17</sup> Following the *Mémoires du Marquis de Torcy*, Voltaire rightly begins the story with the Peace of Ryswick "which was made through weariness of war," and because Louis XIV, "believing he was secure in the glory that is given by arms now desired to gain renown for moderation."<sup>18</sup> Although Voltaire blames Louis XIV's arrogance that led him into war after the Peace of Nimwegen, he nowhere implies that Louis' greatness had been diminished by the War of the League of Augsburg. In fact, he even uses the expression that Louis made peace "as though he had been vanquished."<sup>19</sup>

Relying also on Torcy, Voltaire offers a new interpretation of the negotiations that preceded the War of Spanish Succession. In the first place, he categorically denies the prevailing opinion that the astonishing ease with which Louis surrendered his rights at Ryswick was simply a manifestation of the profound statecraft by which he was preparing to succeed to Spanish lands.<sup>20</sup> Faithful to the Torcy *Mémoires*, Voltaire insists that the French king had no designs on Spain at Ryswick, and at no time before the death of Charles II was he ambitious for the

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<sup>16</sup> Unless otherwise specified this account is based on chapter xvii of the *Siècle de Louis XIV*. Cf. *Oeuvres* (La Hure), IX, 30-47.

<sup>17</sup> *Mémoires de Torcy in Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France*, (Michaud et Pajoulet, eds. Paris: 1836-39). The Marquis de Torcy (Jean Baptiste Colbert), was Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs during the period which he describes in the *Mémoires* which were reputed to be the work of an honest and capable minister. Cf. *Les sources de l'histoire de France* (Paris: 1901-26), XII, 191.

<sup>18</sup> *Oeuvres* (La Hure), IX, 31-32.

<sup>19</sup> *Idem*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*



entire inheritance.<sup>21</sup> It was not until after the Peace and probably at the instigation of Torcy himself, that partition was decided upon. Indeed, the central theme throughout the chapter is the fact that without either treaty or intrigue, without Louis' entertaining even the least hope of succession to the throne, the entire Spanish possessions were bequeathed to the House of France. If there was any persuasion on the part of France to secure the Spanish inheritance it came, Voltaire says, from the Spanish recognition of Louis XIV's greatness. The emphasis here is Voltaire's, but the facts supporting his position are drawn from Torcy. In almost all of the essential facts Voltaire adheres to Torcy's account, but whereas Torcy makes a detailed factual report of events as they occurred, Voltaire comprehends the whole picture, includes the details but subordinates them to the main issues. With a minimum of words, but far more vividly than Torcy, Voltaire, for example, relates the complex and otherwise prosaic subject of the contradictory claims to the Spanish inheritance. Instead of a mere genealogical account Voltaire attracts the attention of the reader with the opening assertion that Louis XIV and Leopold had equal rights. He supplies reasons for giving the preference to the House of France so far as the natural rights of succession are concerned;<sup>22</sup> but he allows for the sentiment as well as hereditary claims that led all Europe, until after Ryswick, to expect that the throne of Spain would be perpetuated in the House of Austria.

There is some departure from a praiseworthy use of a source when Voltaire includes in this chapter some material not found in Torcy yet not accredited to any other authority. This change from one source to another without any indication is a feature that is common to all Voltaire's histories. Moreover, he omits at will in this, as in the use of other sources, some facts that the author of the source deemed important. Thus Charles II's concern for religion in Spain if his possessions should be divided, is not mentioned by Voltaire despite the fact that Torcy makes this the basis for the Spanish king's letter to the pope. Voltaire mentions the letter to Innocent XII, and he remarks that Charles regarded the matter as a question of conscience, but he does

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<sup>21</sup> Despite Voltaire's insistence that the Peace of Ryswick was in no way influenced by French desire to obtain a part or all of the Spanish territory; he, nevertheless, makes at least three references to the Peace as the event which procured the throne of Spain for the grandson of Louis XIV. Cf. *Oeuvres* (La Hure) IX, 31, 33, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Both Louis XIV and Leopold were descended from Philip III in the female line; but Louis was the son of the elder daughter of Philip III. Cf. *Oeuvres* (La Hure), IX, 35.

not, like Torcy, make the pope's reply the determining factor in the King's decision to will his lands to the Bourbon. Nor does Voltaire who ruled out Providence in all his histories, see with Torcy, the Hand of Providence in the events that the minister witnessed.<sup>23</sup>

This detailed analysis of a chapter from the *Siècle de Louis XIV* illustrates in general, the admirable use that Voltaire could make of a source when he wished to do so. His presentation of the Spanish Succession with a few exceptions, is a vivid and accurate exposition of what might otherwise have been a dry discussion of diplomatic affairs. In this, and in other parts of the *Siècle* there is a remarkable application of the principles set forth in Voltaire's letter to Hénault:

My secret is to force the reader to say to himself: Will Philip V be king? will he be driven from Spain? will Holland be defeated? will Louis XIV surrender? in a word I have wished to appeal to the reader's emotions even in history.<sup>24</sup>

The dramatic quality so evident in portions of Voltaire's historical writing does not detract from the general trustworthiness of the work when, as in the chapter under discussion, the reader can be confident that the details are accurate. It is unfortunate that Voltaire did not maintain throughout his histories the standard of accuracy that his research and intellectual capacity should have made possible. He professes to have made extraordinary efforts to discover truth and to have related it with scrupulous exactness;<sup>25</sup> further examples from his histories will illustrate the degree of success that he achieved.

Voltaire's prejudices played a considerable part in determining his use of sources. A survey of his histories would teach one, if he accepted the data therein, that Saint Peter never went to Rome; for, Voltaire reasons, if he had been pope in Rome the Christians would certainly not have dedicated the first Latin church to Saint John (Saint John Lateran).<sup>26</sup> The first Christians, Voltaire discovers, were never persecuted until the time of Domitian, and under that emperor, according to Dio Cassius, whom Voltaire accepts, "some people were put to death

<sup>23</sup> *Mémoires*, loc. cit., 547.

<sup>24</sup> *Oeuvres* (Baudouin), LXV, 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Oeuvres* (Baudouin), LXVI, 35; (La Hure), IX, 143. These citations are only two of the many references Voltaire makes to his zeal for truth in history.

<sup>26</sup> *Idem*, (La Hure), VII, 171-2. Apparently Voltaire was ignorant of fact that this church was originally dedicated to the Holy Savior and that the saint for whom it was finally named was John the Baptist, not the Apostle.



as atheists and for imitating the manner of the Jews."<sup>27</sup> Voltaire can not countenance miracles and therefore "Constantine triumphed over Maxentius; but *certainly* the *Labarum* with its Greek inscription, never appeared to him in the clouds in Picardy."<sup>28</sup> The Church, he says, has ranked among her saints, Charlemagne, who, along with other crimes, shed so much blood and deprived his nephews of their inheritance;<sup>29</sup> but she has never admitted Alfred the Great to the catalogue of the canonized because he did not rebuild monasteries or "encourage those immense families who without parents or children perpetuate themselves at the expense of a nation."<sup>30</sup> Often Voltaire gave as his authority for a statement the fact that "all historians agree"; but in the case of Thomas More he objected to the "unanimous opinion of historians" that More was a virtuous person "who was filled with mildness and goodness as well as learning." Without any other authority than his own judgment, Voltaire says that the truth about More is "he was a superstitious and cruel persecutor . . . He merited to be condemned to death for his cruelties and not for having denied the new supremacy of Henry VIII."<sup>31</sup>

Voltaire must have learned some truths about the founder of the Society of Jesus since he was educated at a Jesuit college, but his account of Ignatius Loyola, as well as most of the chapter on religious orders, is maliciously falsified or misinterpreted. He represents Ignatius as an ignorant gentleman whose head was turned by books of chivalry. He refused to join the Theatines or any existing order, Voltaire asserts, because he was too vain and ambitious to enlist under any other commander. His fast of seven days and nights was almost incredible to Voltaire who states that "it indicated a very feeble mind with an extremely robust constitution."<sup>32</sup>

When he investigated the life of Mohammed, however, Voltaire

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>28</sup> *Idem*, VIII, 373.

<sup>29</sup> *Idem*, VII, 204. Popular affection caused him to be venerated as a saint in some parts of the Empire. He was "canonized" by the anti-pope Paschal III, for political reasons, in 1165. This feast was never inserted in the Roman Breviary nor extended to the Church universal. However, his *cultus* was permitted at Aachen.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>31</sup> *Idem*, VIII, 25-6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 44. The article in the *Dictionnaire philosophique* is much more derogatory toward Ignatius.

found that the Arab was a learned person and even a poet.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, an analysis of the Mohammedan beliefs and practices brought Voltaire to admire the severity that he noted in that religion while he condemned as voluptuous the religion of the Jews.<sup>34</sup>

There are other inaccuracies, such as his infamous but well-known travesty on Joan of Arc; but, despite these glaring fallacies, one must admit that where he did not permit his prejudices to guide him Voltaire assembled an astonishing number of correct facts. It is his ability to use sources accurately that makes him the more guilty when he dishonestly reports historical data. His exactitude upon occasion makes it clear that most of his inaccuracies were not just mistakes; they were conscious fallacies determined by his purpose in writing history.

Voltaire claimed that one of the reasons which motivated his history writing was his dissatisfaction with the boring compilations of fables, legends, and superstitions that passed for history in his day. Nevertheless, he uses a strange method of counteracting history of that type. Actually, he perpetuates and popularizes many stories that other historians had already discarded as fabulous or unfounded when he vividly related some of the more spectacular "miracles," legends, or customs that he came across in his research. It is true, he passed them on as fables, but they made significant reading for those who were on the alert for anything that would discredit established religion or other traditions that they did not like. Thus the story of the *Sainte ampoule* might have been tolerated as a fable related to illustrate the credulity of early Frenchmen (if one did not want to regard it as a possible miracle) if Voltaire had told it once in its proper setting. But when he frequently repeats it, and others like it, under various circumstances and in flippant language, it is clear that his only object is to ridicule the supernatural.<sup>35</sup>

It is not often possible to check the exactness with which Voltaire quotes from the sources. The editions that he used are either unknown or inaccessible,<sup>36</sup> and the fact that direct quotations do not correspond

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<sup>33</sup> *Idem*, VII, 158.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>35</sup> Significantly, other historians, among them Father Daniel whom Voltaire tried to discredit completely, have not included this story in their accounts of Clovis, while Velli and some others who do relate it, tell it as a fable.

<sup>36</sup> Further research, especially in the Voltaire Library at Leningrad, will disclose many of the exact editions that Voltaire used.



word for word with the modern editions does not mean that Voltaire is guilty of misquoting. Often there is no way of learning whether he used a Latin source in the original or in the French translation; the same holds for other languages, and therefore minor differences in the text, even in the matter of a direct quotation, do not redound to the author's discredit. In some cases, where it was possible to check, Voltaire has been found to be accurate in the passages that he quoted directly from other authors. It is known, for instance, that he used Sale's translation of the *Koran*, and investigation proves that he quoted correctly from it. However, interpolations which affect the objectivity and accuracy of the histories are frequently inserted in a passage that is attributed to another.

Another technique in Voltaire's use of sources is seen in his adherence to an authority only so long as it was in harmony with his views. Thus he found Sully a trustworthy source for the story of the conversion of Henry IV of France up to the point where Sully gives evidence that he believes the king became sincere in his conversion to the Catholic faith. Now if the source was reliable for that part of the story which shows Sully advising the king of the political expediency of changing his religion, it seems only reasonable to expect that Voltaire should either continue to follow the *Mémoires* or else offer some explanation for being at variance with the conclusions that Sully reached.<sup>37</sup> The honest use of a source consists in something more than the selection of just those facts that harmonize with one's own opinions even when the data as far as it goes, is accurately recorded and credited to the proper authority. To ignore essential matter in the testimony can distort truth as much as to quote from it incorrectly.

The lack of objectivity in Voltaire's interpretation of sources is further noted in the summary statement he makes on Louis VIII's will which left a hundred *sous* to each of the two thousand leprosaria in the kingdom. "In the end," Voltaire comments, "leprous infection seems to have been the only fruit the Christians reaped from the Crusades."<sup>38</sup> His contempt for the military efforts of Christian Europe to regain the Holy Land is demonstrated in many cynical remarks about the Crusades, and his repugnance for medieval history in general is illustrated in all of the chapters that treat of this period. But even

<sup>37</sup> *Oeuvres* (La Hure), VIII, pp. 198-223; *Memoirs of the Duke of Sully* (Edinburgh: 1819), I, 338 ff, 380-1. Sully's opinion may be open to question, but that does not excuse Voltaire from wholly ignoring this part of the *Memoirs* when he had explicitly claimed Sully as his source for the account.

<sup>38</sup> *Oeuvres* (La Hure), VII, 327.

more noticeable is the anti-papal bias that prevails throughout all of his historical writings with the exception of the *Histoire de Charles XII*. His prejudice in this regard is more frequently exhibited by the contemptuous manner in which he speaks of the papacy and the actions of the popes, than it is in any prolonged criticisms of the Holy See. Adrian IV, for instance, is spoken of as "an English beggar who rose to become Bishop of Rome, gave Ireland away, by his own authority to a man [Henry II] who wished to usurp it."<sup>39</sup>

Voltaire's predilection for the Mohammedans is implied whenever there is an occasion to refer to them, but it is not always as literally stated as in the following passage:

The Arabians civilized Asia, Africa, and a part of Spain up to the time when they were subjugated by the Turks and finally driven out by the Spaniards; then ignorance covered all these beautiful regions; then the manners of mankind from Bagdad to Rome were rendered harsh, gloomy, and barbarous.<sup>40</sup>

These examples chosen rather arbitrarily from the histories, could be multiplied if further evidence is needed to show that Voltaire's interpretation of sources was, in large measure quite subjective, and that his method of exposition, particularly his epigrammatic style, as well as a liberal use of repetition as a rhetorical aid for projecting his own biased opinions on his readers, did more to keep his works from being impartial than absolute errors would have done.

Voltaire's subjective analysis of the sources injures his sense of proportion in the presentation of the events of the past. Thus the story of the false messiah, Sabbatei-Servi, in Voltaire's estimation, was an event that "drew the attention of all Europe and Asia," and was therefore narrated with details and reflections that filled three pages.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, in the chapter on science and the fine arts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a total of ten lines is considered sufficient for painting, architecture, and music under Cimabue, Giotto, Brunelleschi, and Guido d'Arezzo;<sup>42</sup> while the same chapter gives a full page to an account of the "festival of the ass" and the importance it exerted on the "fable" of the "House of Loretto."<sup>43</sup> Certainly, no

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>40</sup> *Idem*, VIII, 374.

<sup>41</sup> *Oeuvres* (La Hure), VIII, 348-51. This citation, and the following ones, would be twice as long in almost any other edition because the print in La Hure is very small.

<sup>42</sup> *Idem*, VII, 470.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 472-3.



historian would deny Galileo a place in a chapter on culture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,<sup>44</sup> but he would object to the historian who would devote the greater part of a page to the famous astronomer and his defense, and yet fail to so much as mention by name the universal geniuses, Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci. These examples are typical of the lack of proportion that one discovers in Voltaire's histories, and it is his emphasis on all phases of what he terms "fanaticism" that leads him to conclude that "in general, history is a collection of crimes, follies, and misfortunes; amongst which we have seen some virtues, and some few happy times, in the same manner as we discover here and there a habitation in a savage desert."<sup>45</sup>

No one will find fault with Voltaire's censures of those writers who "particularize every circumstance in modern history; who enter into all the secrets of the ministers; and who give an exact relation of every battle which the generals themselves would have found great trouble in doing."<sup>46</sup> One would likewise agree with Voltaire that interpretation is an indispensable element to all historical composition. But notoriously conspicuous to the investigator is Voltaire's failure to carry over into practice any consistently impartial interpretation of facts. The *Essai* in particular must be denounced for the fallacious conclusions which the author drew from the research that, quantitatively considered, was satisfactory; and yet it is the *Essai* that is generally cited as the work on which Voltaire's title to "creator of modern history" rests.

Voltaire reproached unjustly those who preceded him in writing history with having copied uncritically and in great detail military and political events of the past. Yet those "compilers of dry annals," as Voltaire styled his predecessors, have given explicit proof of their conviction that the historian should avoid inconsequential details and that he should be concerned with the causes of the events that he relates. If Voltaire had only consulted the preface to the 1732 edition of Daniel's *History of France* he would have discovered that the Jesuit had preceded him in pointing out the necessity for separating history from fable,<sup>47</sup> and he would have learned that Daniel had also realized

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 616.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>46</sup> *Works* (1780) IX, 270.

<sup>47</sup> G. Daniel, *The History of France* (5 vols. English trans., London: 1732). I, Preface, 29. Cf. also editor's preface, 15.

the importance of establishing the relation between the events and the causes of them.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Bossuet, whose *Discourse on Universal History* had antedated Voltaire's *Essai* by three quarters of a century, had not only discounted fables and legends<sup>49</sup> but he had also explicitly stated a theory of cause and effect that is distinct from the Providential theory of history always associated with his name.<sup>50</sup>

Despite his expressed desire "to make only a general tableau of manners and not a detailed history"<sup>51</sup> Voltaire could not resist the opportunity to relate even trifling details if he thought they might contribute to general reader interest. His attempts to excuse his action indicate that he realized he was guilty of a practice that he had condemned in others.

Voltaire's expressed contempt for the chronological and annalistic method of presenting historical events and his insistence on an interpretative account in preference to a factual report prompted him, at least theoretically, to adopt a topical arrangement of material with emphasis on the cultural rather than the military or political aspect of history. He repudiated his predecessors in the writing of history on the basis that they had "nothing to tell us, but that on the banks of the Oxus and the Jaxartes one barbarian has been succeeded by another barbarian,"<sup>52</sup> yet he was not successful in following his own precepts for historical exposition.

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<sup>48</sup> *Idem*, editor's preface, 6: "Daniel is more universally esteemed than any other modern for conveying just and clear ideas of his subject to his readers, for delivering his opinions freely concerning bad kings and corrupt ministers, for morals and politicks less blamable than any other Author of his nation or Order, and the evident connection there appears to be, between the causes and events which he ascribes to them." [Sic]

<sup>49</sup> Bossuet, *An Universal History*. (English trans. London: 1889), 409. "I shall not here count among great empires, that of Bacchus or that of Hercules, those renowned conquerors of the Indies and the East. Their histories have no certainty, their conquests have no connection; so we must leave them to be celebrated by the poets, who have made them the great subject of their fables."

<sup>50</sup> Bossuet's history, of course, is notable for overemphasizing the intervention of Providence in human affairs, but Bossuet did not wholly ignore natural or secondary principles in his theory of causation. Cf. *ibid.*, "The revolutions of empires have particular causes, which princes ought to study. . . . And as in all affairs there is that which prepares them, that which determines to undertake them and that which makes them succeed, the true knowledge of history is to mark, in every period, those secret dispositions which have prepared the way for great changes, and the important conjunctures that have brought those changes to pass."

<sup>51</sup> *Oeuvres* (Baudouin) LXV, 48.

<sup>52</sup> *Works* (Du Mont), X, 93.



One of his works, the *Annales de l'empire*, runs counter to all that he demands of historical composition for, as its very title suggests, it is nothing more than a year by year record of the chief events in the history of the Empire. Nor does the *Histoire de Charles XII*, despite all its excellence as a vivid prose narrative, go beyond conventional biographical patterns which trace in the order of their occurrence the daring exploits of a soldier-king.

Voltaire had had considerable experience in historical composition by the time he wrote the *Histoire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand*, yet, except for his attempt to relate the Russian ruler to his country and age, this history with its continued emphasis on political and military elements, is not very different from the *Histoire de Charles XII*.

*The Siècle de Louis XIV* more closely approximates a topical exposition of historical content than do any other of Voltaire's works. Although it was planned as a vast tableau of the reign of Louis XIV, and while there are some passages that measure up to all that is admirable in history writing, it nevertheless fails to add anything significant to historiography. Time-succession is strictly observed for a space of twenty-four chapters in which exclusive attention is given to political and military events. The contents of the four subsequent chapters is purely anecdotal, and not until he reaches the twenty-ninth chapter does Voltaire concern himself with that part of the history which, according to his boast, was to make his work so superior to all others. Relegated as they are to the end of the study, and as wholly detached from each other as they are unrelated to the rest of the narratives, these chapters on the arts, science, finance, religion and other subjects are very disappointing to one who expects a unified and topical study of the reign of the Grand Monarch.

Voltaire's attempt to arrange his material according to an effective topical order met with even less success in the *Essai sur les mœurs*. He set out to write a cultural history that would be universal in scope; he ended with a work that has been aptly described by Faguet as "*un joli chaos*, a tumultuous disorder, lacking in design and direction."<sup>53</sup>

Voltaire's inclusion of non-European nations, hitherto neglected by writers of "universal histories," was a step in advance over his predecessors,<sup>54</sup> but the composition of the *Essai*, following as it does a

<sup>53</sup> Cited by John Black, *The Art of History* (London: Methuen, 1926), 38.

<sup>54</sup> This idea was not original with Voltaire. Bossuet realized the significance of Moslem culture and on the last page of his *Discourse* indicated his intention of including that civilization in a subsequent volume that he hoped write. It may have been Voltaire, who knew Bossuet's works, took the idea from him.

century-by-century account of the various nations, is wholly lacking in unity and coherence. In fact, the only thread of unity that Voltaire can discover in a thousand years of history is the conflict between the empire and the papacy. He stated as much in his supplementary remarks to the *Essai*:

We soon observed [he wrote] that from the time of Charlemagne to the present, disputes between the empire and the priesthood have been the source of all the revolutions in the Catholic part of Europe; this is the thread by which we are to be guided in the labyrinth of modern history.<sup>55</sup>

Even a superficial reading of the *Essai* soon reveals that Voltaire's professed attention to cultural history is not exemplified in that work. It is true, he makes an inquiry into manners, customs, arts, science and the spirit of nations, but apparently he believed that he had handled this aspect of the composition satisfactorily when he merely summarized in an occasional chapter the cultural developments of two or three centuries. Evidently he saw little reason for establishing a relationship between the cultural and political history because in this, as in the *Siècle*, the arts, sciences and other cultural aspects are treated as distinct topics that have no connection whatever with other subjects in the history.

Moreover, Voltaire's claim that he was the first to give space to the arts, science, and manners of nations is not borne out by the facts. Other historians<sup>56</sup> had preceded him in giving some attention to the culture of the people of whom they wrote, and it is therefore impossible to agree with critics who attribute to Voltaire the credit of having founded the genre known as *Kulturgeschichte*.<sup>57</sup>

Neither can Voltaire be considered a pioneer in his demand that the results of historical research should be artistic from the literary point of view. The *philosophe* himself recognized the rhetorical excellence in the works of the "illustrious Bossuet," and other historians from the

<sup>55</sup> *Works* (1780), IV, 299.

<sup>56</sup> For example, Charlevoix in several works on the New World and in his *Histoire du Japon* (5 vols., Paris, 1744), devoted space to the culture of the people he described. Moreover, in his preface to the *History of New France*, trans. J. G. Shea (New York, 1860), he explicitly stated: "I shall introduce all that concerns the character of the nation, its origin, government, religion, good or bad qualities, the climate and nature of the country, its chief wealth. . ."

<sup>57</sup> Among others see G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), 8; H. E. Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1937), 153.



time of Cicero have enunciated the desirability of an artistic literary form in the writing of history.<sup>58</sup> Although Voltaire relied upon every possible literary device to achieve readability in his works, it can not be concluded that he sacrificed historical accuracy to literary expression except when he consciously used rhetorical aids to give weight to a subjective and biased interpretation.

An examination of Voltaire's histories shows that he was thoroughly aware of the instruments for critically evaluating sources, but his prejudices did not permit him to present with any degree of consistent objectivity the results of his investigations. Hence, it can be concluded that while he knew how to appraise the data he accumulated, Voltaire through deliberate misinterpretations, omissions, or interpolations has falsified history in favor of his preconceived thesis which served to bring discredit on established authority and particularly on the Church.

On the other hand, however, examples from his works also prove that Voltaire was capable of arriving at an exact and impartial interpretation of sources when the result was not at variance with his own purpose. These examples show that he could, and upon occasion did, present the findings in an effective style that did not compromise historical accuracy. Although he occasionally exhibited a high degree of competence in the writing of history, Voltaire fell short of his ambition to produce a history *en philosophe*; and there is reason to believe that, at times at least, his work is more aptly described by his flippant remark to Cideville, that "history is after all, only a pack of tricks we play on the dead." Certainly, Voltaire was guilty of using historical data in a manner that vitiated truth, and hence he has failed to exemplify the moral integrity which is one of the first qualities expected in any competent historian.

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. the English edition of Daniel's *Histoire de France*, *op. cit.* See preface, I, 19. Several pages of this long discourse on the methods to be employed in the writing of history are devoted to style. Cf. 18-31.

# MORE HIGHLY SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR HISTORIANS OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE AVAILABLE IN SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY'S NEW CURRICULUM OF MEDIAEVAL STUDIES IN HISTORY

*By Daniel D. McGarry\**

With the beginning of its 1950-1951 academic year, Saint Louis University inaugurated a new Curriculum of Mediaeval Studies in its Department of History. This program takes cognizance both of the fundamental importance of the Middle Ages in the formation of our western civilization, and of the need of more thorough and more highly specialized training for mediaeval historians. In launching its new scholarly project, the University proceeded despite the fact that the program will certainly not pay its own way in a monetary manner. Notwithstanding, the university took this forward step in recognition of a real need, which at the same time constitutes a real opportunity to improve instructional standards in a key and basic period of western history.

Despite the increasing attention given within the past century to the Middle Ages in European and American institutions of higher learning, in no case, prior to the present, has the trend, as far as the writer has been able to determine, resulted in the establishment of a comprehensive, fully rounded curriculum of mediaeval history. Mediaeval history courses have tended to be strictly limited to the frequently part-time offerings of a single teacher, or to lay greater stress on philosophy and literature, or to emphasize the training of archivists and librarians, as in the case of the French *École Nationale des Chartes*, or otherwise to fall short of thorough historical coverage. The Saint Louis curriculum has attempted to remedy this deficiency, and to make its forte *history*, in both the stricter and broader sense. That fact is clearly declared by its title: "Curriculum of Mediaeval Studies of the Department of History," its official printed announcement of its purpose as "the preparation of well trained, soundly

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grounded teachers of mediaeval history and civilization," and its wide offering of courses on mediaeval and renaissance history.

The Curriculum corresponds to the spirit of the old dictum, rather clumsily yet cogently stated, that to be successful, a teacher of history must go to his classes "as an iceberg: nine-tenths submerged." In other words, his knowledge of his subject must be many times that which he directly dispenses in his lectures. This principle similarly applies to his research. Accordingly the Curriculum provides an extensive offering of specialized courses, designed both to prepare its clients for teaching, and to open up to them wide and attractive vistas for further study. In so doing it attempts to explore all the main dimensions of its subject.

As thorough as possible coverage is accordingly given. The basic general requirement is a six-unit course in Mediaeval History, or its equivalent. A total of twenty-four more specialized courses in mediaeval history are provided. These may be divided into five principal categories. The development of the principal mediaeval states, together with cognate topics and peoples, is treated in three-unit courses on France, England (and Ireland), Spain (and Portugal), the Holy Roman Empire (with Italy), Islam, and the Byzantine Empire. Further mediaeval institutions, and speculation concerning them, are handled in courses, generally of three units, on Economic and Social History, the Papacy, Monasticism, Church and State, and Political Theories. The highly significant history of education and learning is stressed in three-unit courses on Monastic and Cathedral Schools and on Mediaeval Universities, as well as two-unit courses on successive "Renaissances" of the period. Key epochs receive due attention in two-unit courses on the Patristic Period, the Age of Barbarian Invasions, the Carolingian Era, the Twelfth Century, the Fourteenth Century, and the "Renaissance" or "Era of Transition." Miscellaneous additional two-unit studies include Anglo-Saxon England, the Normans, the Crusades, Great Mediaeval Popes, Mediaeval Historiography, Paleography, and seminar work.

Excellent corollary mediaeval courses offered by other departments are plentiful, and afford strong support for the program. Included are: History of Greek and Mediaeval Philosophy, Mediaeval Philosophy, Thomistic Philosophy, Renaissance Philosophy, History of Political Thought to 1500, Studies in the History of Mediaeval Political Theory, Mediaeval Economic Theories, Introduction to Mediaeval Latin, Latin Hymnology, Mediaeval English Literature, Chaucer, Studies in

Mediaeval English, Mediaeval French Literature, Introduction to Dante, Mediaeval Spanish Literature, Mediaeval German Literature, St. Augustine's *City of God*, and Geographical Influences in Mediaeval History.

The Curriculum leads to the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy. Normally course requirements for the doctorate may be completed in three years. Courses are conducted by Dr. Anthony F. Czajkowski, Rev. Lowrie J. Daly, Rev. Thomas L. Coonan, and Dr. Daniel D. McGarry of the History Department, assisted by Dr. Vernon J. Bourke, John W. Conoyer, Rev. Bernard W. Dempsey, Dr. Gustave V. Grevenig, Rev. Robert J. Henle, Rev. George W. Klubertanz, Dr. William C. Korfmacher, Dr. Mary Manley, Rev. Charles N. R. McCoy, Rev. Bakewell Morrison, Bernard D. Morrissey, Rev. John Joseph O'Brien, and Dr. John V. Tillman from other departments.

Factors of advantage possessed by Saint Louis University for the conduct of such a Curriculum include not only the excellent support traditionally available in the university for this type of studies, but also its central location in the city, in the Mississippi Valley, and in North America, together with available library resources, present and contemplated.

The St. Louis University Library, well stocked with mediaeval materials, is especially strong in large collections of sources for the history of the Middle Ages. Available also to University students, by reciprocal arrangements, are the holdings of greater St. Louis libraries, and works, often of unusual value, available in smaller libraries of the St. Louis area. Altogether the foregoing total over three million volumes. It may also be mentioned that the central location of St. Louis places many of the greatest libraries in the United States and Canada within ready reach of the advanced student engaged in definitive research.

Jointly with its new program, the university has also adopted a policy of further multiplying its mediaeval and renaissance holdings. This is being accomplished not only by the purchase of books, but also by microfilming. The university has recently launched an extensive project to microfilm European manuscript and printed materials for the history of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The latter, already in progress under the direction of Rev. Lowrie J. Daly, is one of the most ambitious and significant undertakings of its kind in history. It will shortly put at the elbow of students in the Curriculum much of the best original source material, while it bids fair to make the Saint



Louis University Library one of the world's leading depositories of microfilm reproductions of mediaeval and renaissance materials.

The historic halls of the first university founded in the United States west of the Mississippi have now become the congenial home of a curriculum of studies in mediaeval history, whose high degree of specialization is not surpassed anywhere in the world. This seems especially appropriate for a university which is named after the great Louis IX, one of the most outstanding kings as well as one of the most important lay saints of the Middle Ages. And it also particularly befits one of the largest Catholic universities in the world; for has not the Church been termed "the hub of the Middle Ages?" With the inception of its new Curriculum of Mediaeval Studies in History under such auspicious circumstances, Saint Louis University has pointed the way for improved training of fully qualified teachers of mediaeval history.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF UNITED STATES CHURCH HISTORY, 1950

E. R. Vollmar, S.J.\*

This bibliography consists of a selection of articles dealing with the history of the Church in continental United States, and is limited to the publications appearing in 1950, or those which have come to attention during the past year. As all such efforts, it is necessarily incomplete — information concerning articles of value not listed will be appreciated by the compiler.

The teacher of history, from elementary school through graduate work, will find items of value in a bibliography of this type. A new light on some phase of the story of the Church will help enliven a class, and will further the research toward the solution of many yet untold incidents in the story of Catholicism in America.

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## MR. DURANT AND THE MIDDLE AGES

Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan \*

Will Durant. *The Age of Faith; the Story of Civilization, 325-1500.* Simon and Schuster, New York. Pp. VII-1196. \$10.00.

This is a book that will probably be required reading for students in some of our colleges and universities. More's the pity! Though titled *The Age of Faith*, there could be no greater misnomer because its author has no conception of the Faith of the Middle Ages. He has read widely but not wisely in exactly the same manner as the author who is the source of many of his ideas and attitudes — G. G. Coulton. Probably Mr. Durant's venom is his own. For example, after a relatively staid and correct account of the Hildebrandine struggle we find the following, "perhaps he (Gregory VII) had loved righteousness too imperiously and had hated iniquity too passionately" (p. 551). The conclusion this reviewer has drawn from a thorough reading of the book is that Mr. Durant has interpreted the simple soul of the Middle Ages in the light of his own complex mind. He expresses deep sympathy for the mediaeval peasant, but, without doubt, the subject would regard that sympathy as misplaced. The mediaeval peasant was not concerned with material or political progress. His major concern was stability, and quiet attachment to the soil was the supreme guarantee of tranquility and performance of his home and heath. His *Faith* was one, his *Belief* was sincere, and both caused him to accept his condition on earth as a preparation for his condition in heaven. He knew that work is the law of nature and that work in itself is not degrading.

The word *servus* (554) was not used during the Middle Ages "for both slave and serf." *Servus* was a slave, but the word for serf was *nativus, custumarius, consuetudinarius*.<sup>1</sup> True it is that "at his (serf's) death the land passed to his children only by consent and satisfaction of the lord" (555). This is legally true, but the realities of the situation were far different. Economy was such that lord and serf were bound closely by self interest, and the instances of dispossession were

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<sup>1</sup> Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, under proper headings. Pierre Bernard, *Etude sur les esclaves et les serfs de l'eglise*, (Paris, 1919).

few and far between. In case of dispute about inheritance, such matters were settled in court. "His actions at law had to be brought before the baronial court" (p. 555) is a gross blunder. The baronial courts (in England, courts baron and leet) were for trials of cases affecting freemen. All cases involving serfs were tried in their own — the manorial court or hallmote, which was presided over by the steward aided by the *jurati* (serfs). A freeman, even though a laborer, would lose his free status the moment he consented to trial in a manorial court.<sup>2</sup> The hallmote was the most important court — and the lord did not carelessly tamper with it — in the manor. Here the serf was tried for offenses against the lord and the community, and here his will (*testamentum*) was registered whereby his holding was disposed of after his death.<sup>3</sup> Again we read, "in the manorial courts plaintiff as well as defendant was imprisoned till judgment was pronounced" (p. 567). This was true generally of the defendant in criminal cases. The reason is obvious. In civil cases, however, both parties had to find pledges,—men who were responsible for both parties to the suit. This was a variation of the wager at law. Until the day of the hallmote both parties went about their business.<sup>4</sup> Even then, manorial custom allowed long delays so that months might elapse before the case was actually tried.

The spirit of mediaeval law has enirely escaped Mr. Durant. He might read with profit the excellent work of Fritz Kern.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Durant has seen fit to draw out of its limbo the *jus primae noctis* (p. 556). His source is Coulton. He would make, in a thoroughly Christian society, fornication, adultery or prostitution a duty. Historians have confused *marceta*, *maritagium* with *jus primae noctis*, when actually there is no relation between them. The former has its source in the family, the latter in the evangelical councils. Even today, royal families and diplomats cannot marry without the consent of parents or government. It was the way in Bracton's time, in St. Louis IX's time, and in ours. According to feudal custom,

<sup>2</sup> F. Maitland, *Manorial Courts*, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> For abundant instances consult one of many edited Court Rolls, e.g. *Court Rolls of Ramsey Abbey and the Honor of Clare*, (ed. W. O. Ault). There are approximately thirty such Rolls and *Cartularia* published for England alone.

<sup>4</sup> G. C. Homans, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century*, (Cambridge, 1941), pp. 414-315.

<sup>5</sup> *Kingship and Law during the Middle Ages*. Oxford, 1939.



the father could marry off his daughter as he wished.<sup>6</sup> Similarly the manorial world mirrored the feudal world. The lord did not wish to lose a serf, but when one married without his consent, a price was demanded, just as in the feudal families. The *Charter of Liberties* and the *Laws* of Henry I are an example of feudal practices in this regard, while the manorial *customals* contain many instances of marriage fees for serfs marrying outside and inside the manor.<sup>7</sup> According to the *Lex Ripuaria* (15:38) the serf marrying off his daughter without the lord's consent could be reduced to servitude. It is this *marcheta* which has been confused with the *jus primae noctis* by thinking that the *jus primae noctis* was the price paid for consent to marry. In many manorial documents this *jus* was called *Culagium*, and *Afforagium*.<sup>8</sup> These terms have to do with food and drink, and *Afforagium* is an indirect tax on beer and wine. Actually, the *jus* consisted in the married parties' abstention from conjugal relations on the first night, and the right of the lord to a customary payment if they did not. Historically, the origin of the *jus* is Biblical, "Sara, exurge, et deprecemur Deum hodie et cras et secundum cras, quia his tribus noctibus Deo jungimur; tertia autem nocte in nostro erimus conjugio."<sup>9</sup> According to the Council of Carthage, 398, those to be married were to present themselves to the priest for his blessing and out of respect for that nuptial blessing were to *pass the first night in continence* (Canon 13). Capitularies and Church Councils make several mentions of this, some legislating for two and three nights abstention. Some Councils recommended that the bride be confided to the care of *paranymphs*.<sup>10</sup> By the twelfth century, morality had declined and some public canonical penances had been commuted to payments in kind or in money. The public penance imposed in this instance consisted in absence from the church for thirty days, plus an offering to the priest. In time, this offering passed to the lord, hence the *jus primae noctis*. Above all, it was the contrary to a licence for immorality.

Mr. Durant has an extraordinary statement on page 569: "Christianity preached mercy, but ecclesiastical courts decreed the same penalties as lay courts for similar crimes." If it is a question of civil

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<sup>6</sup> *Chronicon Sancti Bertini*, cap. 53.

<sup>7</sup> See Du Cange, *op. cit.*, under the terms, *marcheta* and *maritagium*.

<sup>8</sup> Du Cange, *op. cit.*, under proper headings.

<sup>9</sup> Tobias, *VIII*, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Du Cange, *op. cit.*; see also Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, XXVIII, 48.

and criminal offenses, there is no question of the correctness of the statement because in such instances the ecclesiastical courts were civil courts, such as the temporal jurisdictions of the Bishops of Liège, of the Abbey of St. Edmund's over Bury St. Edmund.<sup>11</sup> If, however, cases concerned wills, oaths, desecration of churches, etc., which were tried in ecclesiastical courts, the punishment was purely penitential. The case of Archbishop Thomas à Beckett defending the culprit, Philip de Broase, Canon of Bedford, furnishes a good example of the attitude of the Church towards this whole matter. Thomas gave up his life as the premium demanded for the avoidance of double jeopardy. We, today, owe it to him that we enjoy this liberty.

Relative to St. Thomas à Beckett, there is much inaccurate history on p. 671. We are told that Beckett was summoned for trial at the royal court; found guilty, he walked from the room, and "that evening he fed a great number of the poor at his London home." The trial referred to began on 8 October, 1164, as part of a meeting of the *magnum concilium*, and the charges preferred against him were but indirectly related to his refusal to consent to the clauses of the *Constitutions of Clarendon*. The trial took place at Northampton and lasted until 13 October. On being found guilty, he went to his lodgings in the monastery of St. Andrew's in that city. Northampton was at least two days journey from London in those days, thus it would have been physically impossible for him to feed the poor in London on the night of 13 October. He did not return to London then, but went to St. Omer, by way of Lincoln and the east coast, where he landed on 2 November, 1164.

According to the Rule of St. Benedict (cap LIX) every monastery was permitted to accept *oblatis*. On this Mr. Durant says, "it was still a custom in the twelfth century for . . . parents to commit children of seven years or older to monasteries as *oblates* (sic) — 'offered up to God'," (p. 785). There is no mention in the Rule of an age limit for children; when there is documentary mention of this matter of seven years, it means some wise parents and wiser abbots have decided on the matter. As regards the statements on Peter the Venerable being "unable to check the progress of the Cluniac monasteries . . . toward a corporate wealth that enabled the monks . . . to live in a degenerate idleness," (p. 786) Mr. Durant might well consult capa X, XI, XII, XV,

<sup>11</sup> *Chronica Jocelini de Brakelonda*, (ed. H. E. Butler, Oxford, 1949); D. C. Douglas, *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds*, London, 1932; M. D. Lobel, *The Borough of St. Edmunds*, Oxford, 1935.

XVI, XVII, XL. of that Saint's own Statutes.<sup>12</sup>

The section on St. Bernard, (pp. 787-792), presents a curious melange of fact and fiction. We are told that Stephen Harding was the *third* abbot of Cîteaux whereas he was the *second*, inasmuch as the status of St. Robert of Molesme is still argued among Cistercian scholars. "The Benedictine Rule was restored . . . and learning was to be discouraged", p. 788. Nowhere in the Rule can the discouragement of learning be found. We do find "fermentum divinae justitiae in discipulorum mentibus conspergatur."<sup>13</sup> The Cistercians adapted the literal Benedictine Rule, and Mr. Durant will find the matter of education legislated for in the Custom Book of the Order.<sup>14</sup> The Customs make provision for numerous "intervals" which could be spent on reading if the individual so wished. Every Benedictine and Cistercian monastery contained, as it does today, its own complete seminary.

Mr. Durant puts the chapter on monastic history in the *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, vol. V, pp. 658-696, to a distorted and evil use. This chapter is the work of Professor A. Hamilton Thompson, an excellent scholar. Thompson's words are, "they (Cistercian laybrothers) took two vows, but were prohibited from learning to read or write" (p. 675) which have become for Mr. Durant, ". . . the Cistercian monks were aided by laybrothers—*conversi*—vowed to celibacy, silence and illiteracy." Both have in mind, "nullus (conversus) habeat librum nec discat aliquid, nisi tantum Pater Noster et Credo in Deum, Misere-meï Deus, et caetera quae debere dici ab eis statutum est; et hoc non litera sed cordetenus."<sup>15</sup> Mr. Thompson's interpretation is correct, Mr. Durant's is fantastic! Nobody could take a vow to remain ignorant. However, since Mr. Thompson's work appeared more than twenty years ago (1929), much additional information on the Cistercian Order has come into print. Many were the laybrothers who were sought by emperor, king, prince and noble for administration.<sup>16</sup> To St. Bernard (p. 789) is ascribed the honor of drawing up a rule whereby the "monastery (Clairvaux) could not buy property." St.

<sup>12</sup> *Petri Venerabilia abbatis Cluniacensis statuta congregationis Cluniacensis*, Migne, PL, 189, cols. 1025-1048).

<sup>13</sup> *Regula*. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ph. Guignard, *Les Monuments primitifs de la règle cistercienne*, (Dijon, 1888), pp. 172-174.

<sup>15</sup> Guignard, *op. cit.*, (usus conversorum) p. 283.

<sup>16</sup> J. D. M. Canivez, *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, 8 volumes. Louvain, 1933-1940.



Bernard knew of only one Rule — the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*. And if he wished to draw up a Rule, the Charter of Charity and the Constitutions of the Order forbade him. Only the Chapter General could draw up statutes, laws, etc., for the Cistercian Order. Cistercian practices were alike even to architecture. All this is minutely laid down in the *Carta Caritatis* of which Mr. Durant speaks (p. 788). Likewise it is stated explicitly that St. Bernard, one of the most learned men of his age, “cared nothing for science and philosophy” (p. 789). What does Mr. Durant mean by “science”? St. Bernard was a skilled musician on which he wrote a treatise; as a Biblical scholar he served on the commission of St. Stephen Harding for a new edition of the *Breviarium* and *Opus Dei*, plus the first projected revision of the Vulgate; as a philosopher and theologian he refuted Abelard. Of course, he was not an atomic physicist. “Pittances” did not “enable the monks to add meat to their diet, and plenty of wine” (p. 792). They supplemented the vegetable diet at times of bleeding, etc.<sup>17</sup>

In one way, the book is highly consistent. It conforms to the opening sentence which states that this book “is a full and fair account of mediaeval civilization, from A.D. 325 to 1300, as space and *prejudice* will permit.” [*italics mine.*]

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<sup>17</sup> For the origin and use of pittance see DuCange, *op. cit.*, *pittantia*, *pictantia*.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

### MEDIAEVAL

*The Mosaics of Norman Sicily*, by Otto Demus, New York: Philosophical Library, 1950. xx, 478 pp. 120 plates. \$18.50.

In a previous book, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration*, Otto Demus has established his reputation as an authority on Byzantine mosaic work. Years of careful, on-the-scene study, between 1939 and 1946, give him the right to speak now with equal authority on the mosaics of Norman Sicily.

These mosaics are very impressive in themselves and probably the most extensive and best preserved examples of 12th century Byzantine decoration in existence, but they have never previously been studied thoroughly. Demus here subjects them to very careful analysis. He divides his study into three parts devoted successively to the individual monuments at Cefula, Palermo, and Monreale; to the iconography of the mosaics; and to the gradual development of a Sicilian style. He demonstrates quite clearly that a local Sicilian style did eventually evolve, eclectic in nature, made up of Byzantine, Benedictine, Arabic, and Norman elements. He also shows that this local style was finally submerged in a strong new Byzantine influence in the decoration of Monreale cathedral.

The study is detailed and scholarly enough to satisfy the specialized student of Byzantine art, but should be of interest to the general historian as well through the influence of the dynastic connections of rulers such as King Roger of Sicily, William I, and William II. For the general reader, part three dealing with the development of style (especially the last chapter concerned with the dissemination of the Sicilian mosaic style into England, Germany, and Spain) will probably be of most interest.

The 120 extraordinarily clear plates make the analysis in the text very easy to follow, and reveal even to the casual eye the impressive themes and rich designs of these little known mosaics. It is regrettable that at least a few of the mosaics were not reproduced in color.

Maurice B. McNamee, S.J., Saint Louis University.

*Translations and Reprints From the Original Sources of History.* Published by the Department of History of the University of Pennsylvania. Third Series. Edited by John L. LaMonte.

Volume III. *Feudal Institutions as Revealed in the Assizes of Romania, the Law Code of Frankish Greece.* Translation of the Text of the Assizes with a Commentary on Feudal Institutions in Greece and in Mediaeval Europe. By Peter W. Topping. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1949, pp. xii, 192. \$3.00.

Volume IV. *Gregory of Tours.* Selections from the Minor Works. Translated by William C. McDermott. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1949. pp. xi, 109. \$2.50.

Volume V. *The Burgundian Code.* Liber Constitutionum Sive Lex Gundobada. Constitutiones Extravagantes. Translated by Katherine Fischer. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949. pp. xiii, 106. \$2.25.

The Third Volume of the Third Series of the University of Pennsylvania Series again reflects the great influence of the editor and eminent authority on the crusades, John L. LaMonte, upon his students and the publications of the series. The choice of the Assizes of Romania for translation was fortunate, for the Assizes comprised the law code of the kingdom of Morea or Achaia, a principality established in the Near East after the conquest of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade. Compiled in the fourteenth century, the Assizes represent the fullest development of feudal law and mirror the feudal society of the crusading states. Although dealing with the particular feudal problems and incidents of Morea, the code also reflects a great deal of western feudal practice before the latter had undergone change under the influence of the growing royal administration and the ideas of Roman law.

The translation has been well accomplished and will be of value to students of the feudal states and of the crusading movement. The average teacher, however, will probably find much more practical use for the commentary which follows the translation. In a space of 74 pages the author has presented as clear an explanation of feudalism and feudal practices as this reviewer has seen. It will prove invaluable for the understanding of the nature of the feudal contract, and the mutual obligations and various incidents involved.

Volume IV departs from the subject of the Crusades and turns to one of the outstanding writers of the early Middle Ages. Gregory of Tours is best known for his *History of the Franks*, which is our main source on the Merovingian period, but he also wrote several minor



works which are almost entirely hagiographical in character. Since the lives of the saints, works of edification and records of miracles were the most popular forms of literature, Gregory was merely satisfying the great demands of this time for religious writing, he made it plain that he was writing for the edification of the Church. To what extent Gregory merely answered the popular demand for edifying literature, and to what extent he helped to foster and popularize it, is problematical. He wrote at least eight works on miracles and made frequent insertions of stories of saints and of miracles worked by them into his *History*. As a result he has been described as one of the most influential writers for the development of hagiography in the west.

McDermott has translated four representative sections of Gregory's minor works. His choice has fallen on the first book of the miracles of Martin of Tours, Gregory's predecessor and hero and one of the most influential of French saints. From among the many lives of eminent churchmen of Gaul he has translated those of St. Gallus of Clermont and St. Gregory of Langres. For its quaint interest rather than for historical information he has included the story of the seven sleepers of Ephesus which Gregory himself probably had in translation from Syriac. The final selection is the "Seven Wonders of the World", which contains an account not only of the seven wonders, but also presents astronomical data by which the clergy could perform certain ceremonies at the proper time of night. Gregory's data, according to modern astronomers, was surprisingly accurate.

These selections reveal the interests and ideals of Merovingian Gaul even better than the more prominent *History of the Franks*, and give an excellent insight into the popular literature of Merovingian times.

Volume V of the Series is an excellent counterpart to Volume III; for whereas the Assizes of Romania revealed the status of feudal law at the end of the Middle Ages, herein we have a translation of a law code at the very beginning of the medieval period. Miss Fischer's translation shows the kind of laws, or more properly customs, that the barbarians brought with them into the Roman Empire. Inasmuch as only the English and Visigothic barbarian law codes have previously been translated into English, the present translation will be welcomed by medievalists. The Burgundian Code provides much information regarding the functioning of Burgundian society and reflects the influence of Roman law and customs upon the Burgundian people. In considering the Roman influences the translator very clearly points out the difference between customary and statutory law, the former associated with the personality of law and the latter with territoriality

of law. The Burgundian Code represents the earliest fusion of the Germanic and Roman laws.

Miss Fischer's conclusion that some of the typically Germanic elements are lacking in the Burgundian lawbook is open to question. She cites as an example that the Germanic idea of the blood feud, wherein the killing of a man obligated the members of his family to avenge his death upon the killer or upon his family, had been replaced by the system of fines and compositions (compensations?) in the code. Actually the substitution must have occurred long before the *Lex Gundobada* came into existence, for Tacitus reported (at the end of the first century A.D.) that "a part of the fine goes to the king or to the tribe, part to the injured party or his relatives".

Although the barbarian codes are noted for their difficult vocabulary and grammar, Miss Fischer has succeeded in rendering a readable and lucid translation.

Anthony F. Czajkowski, Saint Louis University.

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*Pelagius and the Fifth Crusade*, by Joseph P. Donovan. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1950. pp. ix, 124. \$2.50.

Although not included in the Translations and Reprints Series, this work nevertheless continues to reflect the great interest of the University of Pennsylvania History Department in the Crusades under the influence of Professor LaMonte. The story of Cardinal Pelagius of Albano has for long been enigmatic to historians. His place in history has been that of a failure — an overbearing, self-willed, haughty papal legate who personally brought about the failure of the Fifth Crusade. LaMonte himself has concluded in his *The World of the Middle Ages* that the "utter dismal failure of the Fifth Crusade must be laid at the door of Pelagius . . . Pelagius brought the whole expedition to ruin." (p. 50).

Father Donovan has re-examined the career of Pelagius and in doing so has recast the figure of the cardinal in a less unfavorable light. After a brilliant career as the closest adviser to Innocent III, Pelagius was entrusted with the most difficult assignment in the Church, representing the Pope in still another attempt to recapture the Holy Land. Once again the attempt failed, but unlike papal legates in preceding and succeeding Crusades, Pelagius uniquely draws the censure of historians for the failure. Father Donovan points out, however, that

modern historians have been more unanimous in their condemnation than thirteenth century writers. Surprisingly, and perhaps significantly, the only critics in the thirteenth century were French, and Frenchmen through the ages have been the most severe critics of the Spanish Pelagius. This particular point should have been developed in greater detail, for the entire story of Pelagius must perforce depend upon the creditability of sources.

Father Donovan's re-examination, although not revealing any new data, has modified the previously condemnatory approach to Pelagius. The Fifth Crusade must be considered against the background of the military, political and religious policies of the thirteenth century. Cardinal Pelagius, although guilty of many mistakes, proved powerless to cope with the many external problems which were beyond his control.

Anthony F. Czajkowski, Saint Louis University.

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*Medieval Literature in Translation*, edited by Charles W. Jones. New York. Longmans, Green and Co. 1950. pp. xx, 1004.

The present work by the noted Professor of English at Cornell University is a welcome recent arrival in the Longmans, Green series of Greek, Latin, and Renaissance "Classics in Translation." It comprises 167 representative translated selections of mediaeval literature, including Latin and the vernacular, prose and poetry, the epic and lyric, the serious and light, drama and history. Included are samples from Christian Tradition, such as *Consolation of Philosophy*; Irish, Old English, Romanesque, Arthurian, Teutonic, Romance, and Late Latin Literature, such as *The Voyage of Bran*, *Beowulf*, Abelard's *Calamities*, *Tristan and Iseult*, *The Prose Edda*, *The Cid*, and *The Confession of Goliath*; together with works of Dante, such as his *Comedy*, and Mediaeval Drama, such as *Master Pierre Patelin*. Its broad outlook is evidenced by the inclusion of early Irish poetry, the liturgy, and Old French comedy. Selections are prefaced by neat introductions by Jones, but, with seven exceptions, already existing translations are used. Notable translators include John Henry Newman, Walter Scott, and Lord Tennyson, together with a long list of tried and trusty laborers in the mediaeval vineyard. Collections copiously used include *The Romanesque Lyric* by P. S. Allen and H. M. Jones; *Mediaeval Latin Lyrics*, tr. Helen Waddell; *Early Mediaeval French Lyrics*, ed. C. C. Abbott; and *The Minnesingers* by



Jethro Bithell. In such an undertaking omissions are inevitable; notable ones include Gregory of Tours and John of Salisbury. Better translations of *The Nibelungenlied* and *The Song of Roland* would seem to be available; in the latter case the rendition by C. K. Scott Moncrieff could well have been employed. Based on the editor's own pedagogical experience, the collection is admirably suited for use in classes on mediaeval literature. It also provides the general reader with variegated, colorful, and interesting selections from the literature of mediaeval Western Europe for over a thousand years in convenient form. While larger libraries will not appreciably increase their stock by its purchase, it will probably be a welcome acquisition for smaller ones, for which, penny per page, and qualitatively as well as quantitatively, it will represent a good buy.

Daniel D. McGarry, Saint Louis University.

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*A History of Philosophical Systems*, edited by Vergilius Ferm. New York. The Philosophical Library. 1950. Pp. xv + 642. \$6.00.

Intended as a textbook for students of philosophy, but useful for the layman as well, the present volume covers the history of philosophical thought from our earliest records up to our time. Its forty-seven chapters are, generally speaking, very readable, informative, and suitably furnished with footnotes and sufficient bibliographical notices to satisfy the needs and tastes of the inquiring student. Although the chapters are nearly uniform in length (ten to fifteen pages) they are far from uniform in content and approach, since each is the work of a distinct author and on widely varying subject-matter: compare, for instance, the sketchy account of the thought of India (Saksena) ranging from the twentieth century B.C. to the present time, with the sophisticated and tendentious interpretation made of Plato by a modern Platonist (Dunham). Nor must the editor's division by "systems" be taken too literally. "System is defined (p. v) as the "general trend or course of thought of a particular time, school or group of thinkers." In fact, the words "group of thinkers" suggest the actual least common denominator, the groups sometimes being formed by the editor for the obvious purpose of including a number of thinkers in one chapter. Yet, however shadowy the meaning of "system" must be kept in order to serve as the basis of division, the editor's handling of historical philosophy in digestible segments recommends itself as a promising pedagogical technique.

The cooperative composition of the volume, moreover, achieves a fair and objective treatment of some portions of the history of philosophy which in general surveys have usually suffered distortions proportionate to the ignorance or bias of the historian. The account of Aristotle by Veatch, for example, presents an Aristotle of consistent philosophical realism, which none, it would seem, but a convinced Aristotelian can expound without seeking at the same time to discredit it. The articles of Thompson and Maurer on the lively and variegated currents of philosophical thought in the Middle Ages are clear and forceful accounts of an integral part of Western philosophy which has seldom been given so fair a hearing. Their inclusion in his book is an especial credit to naturalistic editor Ferm; for the careful reader will see that they make nonsense of his own handling of religion as though it were earthbound emotionalism and of St. Augustine, Origen, and other early Christians as though they hoped or pretended to reduce their supernatural faith to a purely natural philosophy. Thus, the first pages of the Thompson article can well be used as a corrective to some of editor Ferm's misconceptions — as that illustrated by his surprise that Augustine after twenty-five years of study on the Trinity should confess that it was still beyond him! Other errors of fact, such as the attribution to Augustine of a Calvinistic irresistible grace and predestination and a Lutheran corruption of nature, make one wish the editor had given over all of Christian thought to more capable hands.

Among the many excellent factual studies in the volume particular mention may be made of those of Clark on the philosophy of the early Greeks and of Hellenistic times, Kullmann on Neoplatonism, Fackenheim on medieval Jewish thought, Stallknecht on Kant, Widgery on German Idealism, Berndtson on Nietzsche and Bergson, Gallagher on contemporary Thomism, Bergmann on Logical Positivism and on Semantics, and Wood on recent epistemologies.

When all due praise has been paid the splendid features of this volume (among which we may note also its attractive format, generally careful proofreading, and an adequate index), one final reservation should be made in the name of philosophy itself. A number of the articles are written with the argumentative and rhetorical overtones of special pleas for the sort of partial skepticism espoused by the author; among the worst offenders, Sellars plumps for materialism, Frankel for positivism, and the editor himself for naturalism. The impression is left for the unwary that philosophy is essentially a tentative and rather hopeless human groping for truth, which —

worse luck! — is quite a relative matter. The implication is that each philosopher starts on his own, makes an ineffectual stab at the truth, and gives place to another who is foredoomed to a like frustration. The question suggests itself whether a satisfactory history of philosophy can be written except by one who understands that philosophy is the love of wisdom, that wisdom is the possession and enjoyment of truth, and that man's search for truth throughout his history has philosophical meaning only in terms of the truth toward which he is striving. Hence, unless it leads to an understanding of the philosophical inadequacies of nominalism, subjectivism, rationalism, crass empiricism, and all other partial acceptances of reality, a history of philosophy can serve only as a catalogue of the variations and perversities of human thinking. The present volume, in spite of the befogging bias apparent in the editor's own essays, presents correctives enough to this relativism in some of the articles mentioned above, and even some indications of the continuity and philosophical intelligibility of the checkered history of philosophy. But, be the reader warned, he will need to dig them out for himself.

L. J. Thro, Saint Louis University.

## MODERN

*Pierre Vergniaud, Voice of the French Revolution*, by Claude G. Bowers. New York. The Macmillan Company. 1950. xiii + 535 pp. \$6.50.

It is unfortunate that this life of Vergniaud is a bad one, for Mr. Bowers is a journalist and diplomatist, not a professional academic historian. A career such as that of Mr. Bowers ought to prepare him to write better history than the comparatively sheltered scholar can write. He has been part of the great world. Yet that world, if this book reflects his attitude toward it, must appear to him in almost childish unreality and simplicity. This is a French Revolution never seen on sea or land, a fairy-tale world of villains and ogres and one lone innocent hero, little Hansel from Limoges, lost in the woods without even a Gretel to hold his hand.

It is not that Mr. Bowers has been in the simpler senses of the word unscholarly. This book represents a lot of hard work in the archives and in the printed sources. It contains few howlers, few errors of simple fact. But it is a surprising book to have come out of the mid-twentieth century, an amazing American version of a work most of us had long thought dead, Lamartine's *Histoire des Girondins*. Indeed,



Mr. Bowers's performance leads one to think that there may well be something in that old notion of the intellectuals of the Age of Mencken that the United States exhibits a certain "cultural lag" behind Europe. But since in so many fields of artistic and scientific creation we clearly have caught up with the world, Mr. Bowers can be dismissed as in some senses an exception, a sport.

Yet there remains the fascinating question as to how far most Americans still accept the fundamental point of view that underlies the more superficial fairy-tale aspect of this book. Of course Vergniaud and his fellow Girondins (with some exception for Mme. Roland, whom Mr. Bowers clearly does not like) appear in this book as pure white, and all his opponents, Right and Left alike, are black. Of course Mirabeau is a traitor, a wicked monarchist at heart; of course Robespierre and Marat are "anarchists"; of course the nobility is corrupt and the clergy — especially the higher clergy — bigoted and hypocritical. We are used to these falsities; they are still in some of our textbooks. Beneath them there lies perhaps a much more profoundly dangerous thing — a belief that the major philosophical, ethical, and political theories of the Enlightenment are right, are not only outlines of a good way of life, but are somehow correct descriptions of what life really is like — or would be, were it not for kings, priests, tradition, and a few more unnatural villains and villainies.

Even if you hold that the Enlightenment was on the whole and in its time a good thing — a view not untenable even for a Christian — you must admit that from Burke to Maritain and Niebuhr — yes, even to Freud — two centuries of life and thought have corrected, deepened, profoundly altered the work of the Enlightenment. Vergniaud was a somewhat shallow *Philosophe* turned orator. He came to a tragic end, but an end not altogether unrelated to certain erroneous ideas he held about man and the universe. He does not seem a saint — not even a Jeffersonian saint.

Crane Brinton, Harvard University.

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*The Victorian Age, 1814 to 1915*, by R. J. Evans. London. Edward Arnold and Co. 1950. Pp. 444. \$2.50.

This is a clear and well balanced account of the development of the English community, and of England's relations with the powers of Europe and with her overseas dependencies during the century from the fall of the Napoleonic Empire to the outbreak of the first world war. It is based in the main on the standard secondary authorities, and is evidently intended as a synthesis and abridgment, suitable at

once for the serious student, and for the general reader whose interest may be more casual.

The emphasis is naturally on internal development, and the central theme is the growth of an industrial society within the framework of an old and established 'politico-social system' based mainly on agriculture. The adaptation of the country's political and social institutions to these altered conditions is described lucidly and at suitable moments the narrative is interrupted to present an analysis of this unique society in process of evolution. Ample consideration is given to constitutional changes; and the author writes with sympathy and understanding of the religious and humanitarian movements which influenced domestic and imperial policy during the century. The chapters on foreign policy follow a traditional pattern. Those on the critical generation before 1914 are especially clear and vigorous. Discussion of the Irish problem is moderate and judicious, although one may doubt whether the failure of the British government to deal effectually with that country's social and economic ills was due wholly to ignorance. At least enough information on the subject seems to have been collected in the course of the century to dispel any but the most invincible ignorance.

One excellent feature of this book is the number of illuminating character sketches of leading statesmen and others. Mr. Evans rightly emphasizes the importance of the contribution of individuals to history; and his portraits of such men as Peel, Gladstone, Disraeli, Asquith and many more add greatly to the interest of his work. There is here no tendency to understate the achievements of the Victorians, but neither is there any complacent acceptance of all their standards; and Mr. Evans can be severe in his criticism of the ignorance, the greed and the prejudice which so often frustrated reform, and sacrificed so much in the name of progress. Not many books of equal scope on this period can be more warmly recommended, at once to the beginner and to the advanced student. For the one it will serve as a stimulating introduction. For the other it will put a crowded and complex period of history into orderly perspective.

D. J. McDougall, University of Toronto.

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*The Destiny of Modern Woman: In the Light of Papal Teaching*, by William B. Flaherty, S.J., Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950, xvii, 206 pp. 3.00.

In the history of modern social movements, feminism holds a significant place. Although frequently confused and cluttered up with

various extrinsic "causes," feminism was basically a movement for the emancipation of women. Like all social movements it numbered among its promoters both radical extremists and moderate conservatives. The bond of unity, the rallying point for all, however, was the idea of woman's downfall and her right to equality with men. Looking back at the period when the movement originated, the impartial observer is forced to admit there was great need for reform. In Christian society women enjoyed a moral hegemony which in fact allowed her to wield an authority equivalent to that of man. With the decay of the Christian outlook which followed the period of the Renaissance and the Protestant Revolt, civil lawmakers fashioned codes of law embodying the notion of the legal incapacity of married women. This resurgence of pagan masculinity is perhaps most evident in the *Civil Code* where the married woman is left with practically no legal competency.

The rebellion of women against the inequalities of their position in society was practically inevitable. Talk of equality was in the air. Besides, the industrial revolution had opened up numerous economic opportunities to women, thus rendering them less dependent upon men. It is the purpose of this book not only to discuss the implications of this revolt but primarily, to analyze the position of the Church in regard to it. Starting with Leo XIII the author has sedulously gathered all the texts in which the last five popes deal with woman's activities and her position in society. As a result, the reader can study the gradual progression of papal thinking on the woman question in modern times. In this connection, it is highly gratifying to find Benedict XV's profound insight into modern social changes properly indicated.

The majority of readers will find the treatment of Pius XII's contribution to the woman question most rewarding. Here for the first time we find an explicit treatment of the whole question: *Roma locuta est!* For Pius XII the problem of women in the modern world hinges entirely on the question of how to maintain and strengthen that dignity which woman has from God. This approach implies no escape from reality. Rather it sets the problem on a sound theological basis quite lacking in most thinking on feminism.

This book should prove very useful to teachers, lecturers, and leaders of discussion groups. The collection and analysis of these papal texts was a work which needed doing and the author has accomplished his work very well.

John L. Thomas, Saint Louis University.



*A History of English Literature*, by Hardin Craig (General Editor). New York. Oxford University Press. 1950. xiii, 697 pp. \$6.00.

There are any number of good multi-volumed histories of English literature, each volume the work of a specialist. This book is another attempt to adapt this method to a one-volume work, in which each major period is handled by a specialist in the field. (The most recent attempt of this kind was *The Literary History of England* under the general editorship of Albert C. Baugh.) This new history is edited by Hardin Craig, with George K. Anderson, Hardin Craig himself, Louis I. Bredvold, and Joseph Warren Beach responsible respectively for the sections on Old and Middle English, the Renaissance, the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, and the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.

As is always the case in such projects, there are considerable differences of the approaches of the various authors. Anderson emphasizes the types of literature in the early periods; Craig attempts to present a complete catalogue of Renaissance literature; Bredvold emphasizes the philosophies that underlie the writings of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century authors; while Beach concentrates on the lives of the individual authors. Perhaps because of the smaller bulk of Old and Middle English literature, Anderson gives a far more detailed and helpful discussion of the individual works than one usually finds in such a book; and perhaps because of the abundance of Renaissance literature, Craig's section tends to become too much of a mere catalogue of authors and titles, except for his treatment of Shakespeare; much more helpful is Bredvold's discussion of the ideological background of Eighteenth Century literature; while the tremendous quantity and variety of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century literature reduces Beach's treatment again to little more than a catalogue.

The chief value of books of this kind lies in a synthesis of the best recent scholarship with the permanent evaluations of the past, presented in an over-all view for the student who is approaching a period of English literature for the first time or who is making a review of a period when he has finished studying it. To be really helpful, therefore, such a book must assimilate the solid conclusions of recent scholars or at least familiarize the reader with them. If there is a defect in this book, it lies just here. There is a select bibliography of books; put practically no references, either in the bibliography or in the text, are given to periodical literature. Since some of the most helpful material for the re-interpretation of both periods and individual authors has appeared only in the learned journals, this is a rather

serious defect in such a book as this. This is especially so, since in some instances it would appear that the authors have not taken notice of the best in recent scholarship. To cite just one pointed example, in the light of recent journal articles on Thomas More, there is no excuse for any author's missing the irony in *The Utopia* as Mr. Craig seems to do on page 182.

The book is probably too detailed to be suitable for the average undergraduate class. Its chief range of appeal, therefore, will be to the graduate student, a fact which makes the slighting of the journal material all the more regrettable. In spite of this obvious defect, the book will probably prove useful to graduate students who want a quick survey of English literature that reads rather well.

M. B. McNamee, Saint Louis University.

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*Giordano Bruno: His Life and Thought*, by Dorothea Waley Singer.  
New York. Henry Schuman. 1950. Pp. xi, 389. \$6.00.

More often than not, writers recall the story of Giordano Bruno only for anti-Catholic purposes rather than for more exact determination of his historical situation. A welcome exception is Mrs. Singer's present work. The author does, it is true, cast the Church and the Inquisitions of Venice and Rome in the role of villains, bent mainly upon extinguishing the spirit of inquiry and advancement of knowledge. Hence she plays down the contemporary impact of Bruno's admitted Arianism and the extent of his commitment to Protestantism. Nevertheless, her main aim is to present the historical circumstances of his life and to chart the growth of his philosophy, a project in which she is largely successful.

The biographical problem is divided conveniently into three main phases: Bruno's youth and first wanderings after his break with the Dominicans (1548-83), his stay in England (1583-85), and his later continental wanderings and death (1585-1600; the last scene is always referred to as a martyrdom). The information concerning Bruno's background and early peregrinations is quite meager. Mrs. Singer wrings the most from the scanty records but does not uncover much that was not known to his nineteenth-century biographers. Her main contribution is made in the description of the three years spent in England. She furnishes a lively account of the Italian refugee circle in Elizabethan England and the household of the French ambassador, the Marquis de Mauvissière (Michel de Castelnau), where Bruno received the most hospitable and enduring welcome of his stormy

career. After casting loose upon the continent again, he passed rapidly from one German town and university to another. The report of his years of imprisonment and burning is taken, with a minimum of comment, from the documentary collections of Spampanato (1933) and Mercati (1940). This is the first extensive use of these materials in English, and it would be worthwhile to examine them from the standpoint of the Inquisitors (among whom was Bellarmine) as well as from that of Bruno.

Apropos of Bruno's English years, Mrs. Singer offers an analysis of the six cosmological and ethical writings upon which his philosophical reputation mainly rests. Her previous researches in the history of Renaissance science enable her to locate Bruno's speculations on the infinite universe within the framework of contemporary discussion. Yet she resists the temptation to regard Bruno himself as belonging to the scientific tradition, despite his interest in scientific findings and his influence upon scientists. A careful analysis is made of the content of Bruno's major writings, but no attempt is made to evaluate them in a critical way. The author is obviously sympathetic with the Brunonian break with traditional theism, although she does not feel at home in his pantheistic, panpsychic universe. Several references are made to Marx's dialectical materialism as to a more sober, scientific version of the doctrine of a coincidence of opposites and ultimate unity of the whole of nature.

An accurate, annotated translation is given of Bruno's masterpiece, *On The Infinite Universe and Worlds*. Readers will find here one of the representative expressions of Renaissance philosophy, in which classical mythology, Lucretius, Cusanus and the Italian poets are made to serve the ends of a new Platonic vision of the universe as an infinite reality. There are also some valuable appendices, containing: a list of Bruno's writings, notes on his first printers, a list of his surviving manuscripts, and a select bibliography of secondary studies. This book is the best general work on Bruno in English and may be used as the starting point for a more detailed and critical study of his philosophy.

James Collins, Saint Louis University.

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*Napoleonic Propaganda*, by Robert B. Holtman. Baton Rouge. Louisiana State University Press. 1950. pp. xv, 272. \$4.00.

The title of this scholarly book is apt and correct, but it can also be misleading. This is a study not of propaganda *about* Napoleon (the Napoleonic legend created largely by Napoleon himself from St. Helena) but of propaganda *by* Napoleon while he was ruler of France.



Historians generally recognize that Napoleon appreciated the importance of mobilizing public opinion, but so far as this reviewer knows, the emphasis has always been on his censorship activities. *Napoleonic Propaganda* is a thorough study of the ways and means used by Napoleon to disseminate his propaganda throughout France and the conquered territories. It deals chiefly, and revealingly, with the official governmental devices set up by Napoleon to achieve this end.

Mr. Holtman's study should be of value to anyone teaching this period of European history. The author used only such materials as were available in this country (which, incidentally, are voluminous), and he is correct in maintaining that materials available only in Europe are not likely to change or even modify greatly any sections of this work. The conclusions are carefully, cautiously made — and they are not in any way startling. This reviewer feels that the conclusions are not nearly as important to the average student or teacher as are the analyses of the devices employed by Napoleon to disseminate his propaganda. For Mr. Holtman correctly concludes that although Napoleon was conscious of the importance of propaganda, his understanding of it and his techniques of employing it were confused and easy-going as compared with more recent regimes.

Thomas P. Neill, Saint Louis University.

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*The Age of Revolution: The Rise and Decline of Liberalism in Europe Since 1815*, by J. J. Saunders. New York. Roy Publishers. 1949. pp. 311. \$3.50.

This is one of the better obituaries of the many that have been written on liberalism in the last decade. The book is divided into three chapters: 1) Liberal Romanticism, treating of the heyday of liberalism in the first half of the nineteenth century; 2) Nationalist Democracy, dealing with the decline of liberalism before nationalism and realism in the latter half of the century; 3) Armageddon and After, a summary treatment of the two world wars and the decease of liberalism.

*The Age of Revolution* differs from most treatments of liberalism in that it pays little attention to liberal ideology. It concentrates instead on the implementation of liberal thought in the legal systems and the institutions of the Western European countries where liberalism was successful. Mr. Saunders has no sympathy for this bourgeoisie ideology which, he says, "repels us by its blatant materialism and its avaricious

selfishness." And this reviewer is inclined to agree with him. But the book would have been more penetrating if Mr. Saunders had made an effort to show the reader how liberalism appealed to the thinking people of the nineteenth century. Writing in reaction to the naive eulogies of liberalism, however, the author tends to dwell more on its repulsiveness than on its attractiveness — and liberalism was undoubtedly ambivalent in this respect.

The reader who is attracted by the sub-title of Mr. Saunders' book will come away from it with one fundamental criticism: in this 300-page essay are many digressions, many tangents and disconcerting flashbacks which the author fails to integrate into the central theme of the book. Such a section is his summary of the events of the first world war which, as they stand in the book, have no connection with the rise or the decline of liberalism.

Mr. Saunders' criticism of liberalism, it is important to note, is made from a Christian point of view, whereas most of the recent attacks on liberalism have been made from a Marxist standpoint.

Thomas P. Neill, Saint Louis University.

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*Russian Nonconformity.* The story of "unofficial" religion in Russia, by Serge Boshakoff. Philadelphia. The Westminster Press. Pp. 192.

At the end of this fascinating volume on Russian Nonconformity, — the religious groups who did not conform to the state religion of Russia, — the Oxford Professor Serge Boshakoff expresses the hope that he presented "a fair and reliable survey of Russian nonconformity", and proceeds to tell the reader of his family or personal connections with members of the various groups discussed. There is indeed an amazing wealth of information presented. The author did endeavor to be fair. Did he succeed? It seemed, after careful reading and pondering that there were several weak spots in this otherwise excellent little book.

For instance, Greek-catholics from Galicia and Carpatho-Russia will remain speechless (not for long!) at seeing themselves turned into *Russian* non-conformists! This is the old way of identifying ancient *Rus* with modern *Russia*, and it drives Ukrainians to white and justified anger. This entire half chapter is weak beyond expression. Prof. Boshakoff refers almost exclusively "for details" to Makarii's antiquated *Istoria Russkoi Tserkvi*, and to Koialovich. This latter book, printed in 1872, when the Russian Government was preparing the brigandage of Chelm (a piece of work which shocked the English

consular authorities), should be left alone, unless one desires to revive the memory of a terrible shame. Historians of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholics have at their disposal a vast recent literature in German, Polish, Ukrainian, French, Latin. Recently in English. Since Koialovich, orthodox writers like Zhukovich (Russian) and Hrushevskij (Ukrainian) have rewritten that history. Boudou's two volumes in French give an exhaustive account of what happened in the XIXth century. A very great number of documents has been published by the Russian archeographical commission, the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Stavropigiatic confraternity of Lviv (for Ukrainians), the Shevchenko museum, and so forth. More recently, Ammann, Gatti-Korolevsky have rewritten the history of the union of Brest and of its destruction. To see all this literature, some of it quite valuable, brushed aside for two fossils like Makari and Koialovich makes one despair of the utility of research.

The second part of this chapter, dealing with *Russian Catholics* is more satisfactory, because the sources are more direct.

The XVIth century "Judaizers" have been studied by Prof. Boshakoff in N. Panov (1877-78), and Levitsky (1872). That seems to be all. This episode of Russian history has been carefully investigated since that time. The chief documents have been published, and an abundant literature appeared. Some fifteen years ago, we dismissed the accusations of drunkenness, debauchery and heresy levelled at Metropolitan Zosima.

Prof. Boshakoff is far more satisfactory, when he studies the genuine *Russian* non-conformists, old-believers or sectarians. He carefully appraises the difference between the priestists and the priestless. A curious connection is drawn between Doukhobors and Freemasons. The "mystic" sects — white doves, jumpers, wanderers, khlysty, skoptsy, are treated decently and interestingly. The information on these groups who constitute the direct object of Prof. Boshakoff's study is extremely good and up to date. A colony of Molokan-Jumpers came to Los Angeles. They published their sacred book *Bozhestvennyia Izrechenia nastavnikov i stradal'tsev za slovo Bozhie, Vieru Iisusa i Dukh Svyatoy Religii Dukhovnykh Khristian Molokan-Prigunov* (Divine Utterances of Teachers and Sufferers for the Word of God, the Faith of Jesus and the Spirit of the Holy Religion of the Spiritual Christians Molokan-Jumpers) at 122 South Utah Street, Los Angeles, California in 1928. This splendid book of 758 pages would have given matter for another interesting chapter in Prof. Boshakoff's useful book.

Joseph H. Ledit, La Maison Bellarmin, Montreal.



*Soviet Politics — The Dilemma of Power*, by Barrington Moore, Jr. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Mass. 1950. Pp. xviii-503.

This book, the second published by the Russian Research Center of Harvard University is not easy to read. Describing the suppression of the New Economic Policy, the author writes:

"A mixture of ideological and nonideological factors appears in what may be termed the necessity for an authoritarian solution of the tensions in Russian society generated by the NEP. The need for an authoritarian solution came from the hostility to the Bolshevik regime of a large portion of the population, that is, nearly all the peasantry as well as those who made their living in the cities from the non socialist sectors of the economy. In addition, the alleged and real hostility of the capitalist world was an important factor in the adoption of an authoritarian solution. This internal and external hostility was in turn based to a considerable extent on the fact that the Bolsheviks were the carriers of a specific ideological tradition" (p. 115).

Shake off the esoteric circumlocutions and you have that Stalin was obliged by interior and exterior necessity to impose on the Russian people the violent collectivisation of farms, the police-controlled and enforced industrialization, but our author would probably disclaim such crudeness. It is even more difficult to squeeze the substance from these 425 pages, written in complicated style, and dedicated to answer these two principal questions:

"Which of the prerevolutionary Bolshevik ideas have been put into effect in the Soviet Union, which ones have been set aside and why? Secondly, what can we learn from this historical experience about the role of ideas in general" (p. 9).

These main queries suggest many others, which the author answers with the aid of the vast and very precise material he accumulated.

The book is divided into three parts: 1. *Leninist theory and practice before the Revolution*. The remote preparation of the Russian revolution is not studied. Though he seems to mildly favor the hypothesis of Prof. Timasheff, that Imperial Russia was on the way to democratic transformation when it was overtaken by the Bolshevik revolution, the author does not discuss it at length. He seeks, in to-day's bolshevik activity, what responds to ideology, what is sacrificed to reality: authority and democracy, contempt for the masses and reliance upon them, ends and means, fixed ideology and meandering tactics, these concepts are opposed to and made to interact on one another.

2. The second part studies the dilemma of authority from Lenin to Stalin. The first subdivision refers to the period when Lenin ruled; the following ones confuse the reader. Events which happened in Lenin's days, others which occurred during the fight for succession, yet others when Stalin already ruled, are mingled in confused synthesis.

3. The Third part: *To-day's dilemma* discusses the Stalin period. It receives the longest development (221-401). It is followed by a chapter of conclusions (402-25); these last twenty-three pages constitute the net gains from the long preceding investigation. The following quotation may give an idea of the author's manner:

"The transfer of the means of production to the society as a whole is the only aspect of Marxist-Leninist doctrine about which one can say with considerable plausibility that the goal has been achieved. For many Marxists, this was not an important goal in itself, but a means to the end of creating a society free from the oppressions believed to be inherent in the capitalist system. Some of the Marxist-Leninist ends appear to have been achieved, particularly the elimination of recurring cycles of unemployment with their corrosive effects on human personality. Yet it would be difficult to maintain that the other goals of liberation have been won" (p. 425).

The thirty-seven pages of notes prove that the author kept his imagination under control. The seventeen page bibliography establishes that he is widely read, and that his research is exhaustive. The index makes reference easy. Barring the style, unnecessarily abstruse, the book is a fine, scholarly achievement. Yet, we read it with a disappointment that made further reading more and more difficult. We had the impression that, for all his scholarliness, the author was away from reality. Our disillusion might be expressed like this:

Politics are the means by which socialism is to be realized. In 1864, when there were no socialist parties as yet, Marx sent the "working-class" to the conquest of the political power throughout the world. Lenin conceived revolution as the outcome of the political action of a small, highly centralized, strongly led party. When he preached total defeatism in 1914-17, he was alone. Even Liebknecht had only abstained at first from voting the military credits. When in 1919 Lenin gathered a few international stragglers at the Kremlin to launch his third International, he saw revolution stalking the world, even if Russia was at the brink of total disaster — a disaster from which it was freed by American charity. At the VIth Congress of the Komintern, the strategy of Communist action in colonies and semi-colonies was established in detail (1928). During the last twenty-two years, that strategy

won the greatest part of Asia to communism. Those men, therefore, in spite of many changes in their party-line, have accomplished a good half of their world program. The changes in the party-line, were obviously secondary and temporary. What was it that remained throughout the years, and gave Communist politics such vitality? That permanent force was the driving power behind Soviet politics. What was it? That question, to which an answer must be urgently found, may have been properly put and answered by Prof. Moore, but I did not see it. If he did state that problem, he covered it with such a complication of words that the solution became intelligible only to the chosen elect who live behind the secure barriers of a terminology which they alone understand and judge.

Joseph H. Ledit, La Maison Bellarmin, Montreal.

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*British Prime Ministers of the Nineteenth Century; Policies and Speeches*, by Joseph Hendershot Park. New York University Press. 1950. pp. xii, 377. \$4.75.

This is a very useful collection of extracts from the speeches of the more important British Prime Ministers of the nineteenth century. Most of these speeches are today hard to get at, being buried in volumes published long ago and now only to be found in the bigger libraries. The extracts given here are of substantial length instead of being little snippets of which most anthologists seem so fond. And the reader will find most of the famous sentences and paragraphs which, if he is of an inquiring mind about British politics, he must often have wished he could read in their context: Canning's calling in of the New World to redress the balance of the Old, Peel's farewell tribute to Cobden, Palmerston's *Civis Romanus sum*, Disraeli's range of exhausted volcanoes, etc. Finally each prime minister is introduced by the editor in a few pages of clear and concise analysis.

It is easy, of course, for a reviewer to indulge in the criticism that the editor has left out certain things that ought to be included. Why include Wellington, when Grey and Liverpool are omitted? I myself should say that we could learn more about the prime ministers who are represented here if we had extracts from other sources besides or instead of their speeches — Peel's *Tamworth Manifesto*, e.g., Disraeli's *Vindication of the English Constitution*, or his novel, *Sybil*, Salisbury's articles in the *Quarterly*, etc. Private letters, moreover are apt to be more revealing about a man's real principles of action than public speeches. Also, to understand the politics of the nineteenth century, we should become acquainted with the minds of some public men who



never became prime ministers. For the underlying principles of foreign policy Castlereagh is as important as Canning or Palmerston; Cobden and Bright had more influence on the mid-Victorian climate of opinion than most prime ministers; and in the late Victorian period Joseph Chamberlain, the man who broke each political party in turn, is more important than any of the prime ministers who were his contemporaries except Gladstone.

But if all these demands of this particular reviewer were to be met, another volume would have to be added to this present one of Professor Park. We owe him thanks for the skilful choice of material he has made. His volume gives a real insight into British politics of the nineteenth century.

Frank H. Underhill, University of Toronto.

## AMERICAN

*A History of the Americas, From Discovery to Nationhood*, by Vera Brown Holmes. New York. The Roland Press. 1950. pp. xiv, 609. \$4.50.

This is the first step in the direction of filling a serious need in the field of American history, a full-length text for the History of the Americas course. The author offers the first half of that story in the present volume. Hers is a pioneering effort on a scale this complete, and hence, there will be disagreement as to her selections and omissions, her apportionment of space, and so forth. These apart, she is to be congratulated for a job well done, scholarly in its background and interesting in its presentation. This reviewer feels that the French and the English have been slighted somewhat and the Dutch forgotten almost altogether, but he applauds excellent chapters on the Spanish and especially the Portuguese, and also on pre-Columbian America. The work is tastily illustrated and the maps are adequate to allow the student to follow the story intelligently.

John F. Bannon, Saint Louis University

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*A Book about American History*, by George Stimpson. New York. Harper and Brothers. 1950. pp. ix, 436. \$3.00.

This book is collection of facts concerning various interesting and difficult points of American History from earliest colonial days up to

and including the First World War, Mr. Stimpson has collected a great deal of information concerning a great variety of subjects with America and its history as the only basis of unity. The origin of many of the states' names, the origin of some of the famous slogans which have key-noted issues in American History, descriptions of various figures in military and political fields, explanations and definitions, all these and numerous other items form the contents of this volume. The book is a veritable storehouse of information which will prove of interest to the reader, of instruction to the student, and of help to the teacher of American History.

The author follows a chronological order in his topics in so far as possible. The fact that he treats of several different and often diverse questions in the same section might lead to dissatisfaction were it not for the rather complete index of articles which is placed at the end of the book. The author is to be complimented on the care for accuracy which he endeavors to maintain throughout the book.

Because there are no sources nor authorities mentioned, the book will perhaps find little favor with professional historians, but I am sure that it will be more than welcome to the busy high school teacher who is interested in supplementing text-book material, with some of the more intimate and interesting details concerning events and persons in our history.

Robert V. Callen, Rockhurst College.

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*The American as Reformer*, by Arthur M. Schlesinger. Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1950. pp. 127. \$2.25.

The name of Arthur M. Schlesinger has come to be associated with the best in United States social history. His recent brief volume, *The American as Reformer*, which grew out of a series of lectures delivered in the spring of 1950 at Pomona College, California, is no exception. This interesting and informative little book should be read by all moulders of thought in this country.

Unlike such works as Thomas H. Greer's *American Social Reform Movements*, which give the history of reform movements and then analyze them in the final chapter, *The American as Reformer* begins with the concluding analysis. The author introduces historical facts only as substantiation.

He gives moral values their correct emphasis, seeing the teachings of Christianity and the attachment to the principles of the Declaration of Independence as fountain heads of the reform spirit. He condemns

the current trends towards opponent-labeling and "condemnation by association." He stands squarely against those "revisionist" historians who hold that the Civil War was an avoidable struggle brought on by extremists. The anti-slavery spirit, in his estimation, was a part of an awakening world consciousness that saw the outlawing of servile labor in many countries and colonial areas. Thus, the abolitionists are seen in a truer and more favorable light.

He modifies the economic interpretation of history, by showing how many outstanding American reformers were men of independent income themselves, and by demonstrating the "tender-hearted . . . 'streak' in the national character."

Schlesinger's analysis of the various types of reformers is not only acute but most practical for Americans today. Those who believe "that all reform must begin with the individual, that you must remake souls before you can remake institutions," will find little consolation in Schlesinger's historical evaluation. He finds that those anti-slavery men who followed this principle, — Emerson and Channing for instance, — "counted for little as compared with the apostles of 'excitement and vehemence.'" (p. 34.) These latter, the "immediatists," of whom Garrison was the mouthpiece, blasted the way for the "gradualists" like Lincoln to carry the crusade to its conclusion.

While one can generally agree that "until recent times the United States has nearly always set the pace for the Old World in reform zeal," this reviewer deems it wise not to pass over too lightly the factory legislation of modern England, (which Schlesinger mentions), the cooperative developments in Scandinavia, and the political advances in the British Dominions (which are an off-shoot of the Old World).

A conclusion of the more ardent followers of Frederick Jackson Turner, — namely, that the West has always acted first in social reform, — does not stand up under Schlesinger's full-scale criticism. He shows that each region led in reforms dictated by its own conditions and needs, (the West in liberalizing the public land policy, for instance, and the East in industrial legislation), while they acted almost simultaneously in matters of common concern, such as (white) manhood suffrage and trust-busting.

In naming the two factors that made us a reforming people, Schlesinger very correctly puts down "the kind of people who emigrated to America." Instead of amplifying this, he contents himself with the remark that their very immigration to this country shows they were a spirited people desirous of change.



To this reviewer that seems entirely too facile an explanation. The Cossacks were the kind of people whose ancestors had realized their desire for a change, but they have not been outstanding for reform zeal. The same could be said of the Argentines and many others. The Puritans moved to America, but even when bending over backwards to give them a "break," Schlesinger merely convinces his readers that the best they could do was to protest the injustice of others. The pre-Civil War Southerners were sons of immigrants, too, and yet throughout the book there is not the slightest indication of any reform spirit among them, except for a few individuals who moved North. (The recent very encouraging efforts of certain forward-looking Southern groups might well have been included. Then the reforming spirit would be understood by a foreign reader as typical of America and not merely of sections of it.)

Too little attention is given in this book, as in so many others by our writers, to the fact that Americans are heirs of a long tradition of representative institutions, dating back to the reign of Edward I. More notice could be given to that diversity of national origins, that predisposed many colonials to an independent spirit since they had no blood-ties with the Mother Country, — to the Scotch-Irish, who gave us so many of our early frontier leaders, to the Irish, who fought for freedom not only in this country but in other English-speaking lands, to the Dutch, the Germans and the rest.

This rather hasty treatment by Schlesinger of one factor in the development of the American reform spirit can easily be amplified in later editions. It should not be allowed to detract from the general excellence of the book, which this reviewer is happy to recommend to all discerning readers.

W. B. Faherty, Regis College.

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*America Faces Russia.* Russian-American Relations From Early Times To Our Day. By Thomas A. Bailey. Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 1950. pp. xi, 375. \$4.00.

*The American Impact On Russia — Diplomatic and Ideological — 1784-1917.* By Max M. Laserson. New York. The MacMillan Company. 1950. pp. xiii, 441. \$5.00.

Within a period of one month (September-October 1950) two noted historians have published books which examine Russo-American relations and which offer a good basis for comparison. Professor Bailey of Stanford University, one of the foremost diplomatic historians in

this country, considers the relationship exclusively from the American viewpoint. Max M. Laserson, of Columbia University, on the other hand, views the relationship from the Russian side; he presents the influence of American philosophical, sociological, economic and political ideas on Russia. Although the two authors often treat the same incidents and individuals, their approach is different and the two books therefore complement rather than supplement each other.

Bailey's survey of the American attitude and popular opinion toward Russian has as its purpose the exploding of the many legends and myths that have arisen concerning the long history of friendship and amity between the two countries. He illustrates that the many acts of seeming friendship on the part of Russia toward the fledgling American republic were really motivated by realistic diplomatic purposes rather than by any sense of sympathy.

Relying upon newspaper editorials and other sources for measuring popular attitudes, Bailey has presented a most interesting survey of United States reactions toward Russian affairs from Catherine the Great to Stalin. Only in his last chapters, treating of the period since 1939, does he attempt to look upon both sides of the picture and to "understand" Russian actions.

The author not only possesses an interesting style which has made all his books very popular, but has also illustrated his chapters with cartoons selected from newspapers and periodicals of the period under discussion. Although the treatment of certain subjects is very brief, even to the point of superficiality, nevertheless Professor Bailey has produced another interesting and readable book.

Professor Laserson does not write as clearly or attractively as Bailey; on the contrary, his writing is often disjointed, obscure and difficult to follow. His main aim is to demonstrate how American ideas and American example influenced Russian thinkers and reformers. The title of the book is perhaps misleading, for impact implies a shattering blow or a collision, whereas American influence on Russian thinkers and especially on Russian actions can hardly be classified as decisive as that. Actually the author presents a good summation of the points of contact between the United States and Russia and the growth of philosophical, sociological, economic and political ideas.

Laserson is most enthusiastic concerning the progress of democratic forces which eventually overthrew the Tsarist regime and established the provisional government, and he here, consciously or unconsciously, defends the viewpoints of himself and of his own class which produced the March revolution. Laserson was a member of the professional

class which guided the movement for democratic government in Russia and became Vice-Director of the Department of Nationalities in the Home Ministry in the provisional government.

In contrast to Bailey, Laserson inclines to the view of traditional friendship between Russia and the United States, although he does recognize the instances of friction. An example of the different interpretations of the same facts is the issue of the United States abrogation of the Treaty of 1832 in retaliation for Russian discrimination against American Jews wishing to enter Russia. Bailey's attitude is one of disdain for an imprudent hysteria which resulted in an insulting message to Russia, thereby turning the articulate Russian public against the United States and hurting American business. Laserson, conversely, views the abrogation as "an unrequited diplomatic lesson in human rights delivered by the Yankees."

The field of American influence on Russian radical thinkers was earlier studied by David Hecht in *Russia Radicals Look to America 1825-1894* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1947), but whereas Hecht limited his study to Russian radical intelligentsia, Laserson has expanded his coverage to include political, diplomatic and cultural contacts and has also studied the entire period from the emergence of the United States as a republic to the fall of the Tsarist regime.

Although Bailey's book will prove of greater interest to students of American diplomatic history and Laserson's to those more interested in the growth of democratic and revolutionary ideas and parties in Russia, both groups can derive great benefit from reading both books.

Anthony F. Czajkowski, Saint Louis University.



## CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is intended to be of service to teachers and students of history by presenting a fairly complete list of historical works announced or published since the previous issue of *The Historical Bulletin*. An asterisk denotes a review of the book in this or a later issue. Unfortunately sometimes the price and the number of pages is not announced.

### MEDIAEVAL

*Anales de Historica Antigua*. Univ. de Buenos Aires. pp. 272.

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This volume of the series contains a series of Scholarly essays on manors, mines, boroughs, shire officials, justices of assize and Court of Common Pleas. These three volumes form one of the most specialized corporate ventures ever undertaken, treating as they do in such varied detail a period of less than ten years of medieval history. From the teachers point of view this is one of the greatest events for them to offer to graduate students in seminar work in the fourteenth century—an excellent opportunity to gain a good insight into a narrow span of medieval history.

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Prat, Ferdinand, S.J., *Jesus Christ*. tr. John J. Heenan, S.J. Bruce. 2 vols. pp. 560, 558. \$12.00.

Teachers of history, especially those of survey courses, now have at hand one of the most scholarly and well balanced lives of Christ ever written. This translation of Fr. Prat's great work places at the disposal of the reader the mature work of an internationally famous scholar and, wonderful to relate, the text is neither dull nor pedantic. Those desiring erudite observations will find their desire satisfied in the footnotes.

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